

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER 2010

Many of the major relevant strategic issues which I would normally report on already form part of today's meeting, and are therefore on the agenda as separate items. They of course include the Station Enquiry Officer Review, the CSR and Financial Planning, Voluntary Redundancy and Regulation A19.

There are other general issues, as below, and I thought it would also be useful to report on a number of high profile operations and events, demonstrating that Devon and Cornwall Police is delivering some tremendous success.

Force Blueprint

As the Blueprint work continues to develop, I am very keen to work closely with members of the Police Authority in a manner which helps to ensure a really active contribution to the development of the work. This will enable the new operating model to take full account of the consultative work the Police Authority undertake as part of their public engagement, as well as helping the authority hold the force to account for providing an efficient and effective service. Accordingly, I have asked that a workshop be organised early in the New Year, engaging members of the Authority and the Blueprint design team. More details of this will follow soon.

2012 Change Programme Update

Whilst the design, development and implementation of the Blueprint remains the priority focus for the Change Programme, other key ICT related activities are being progressed to support it. For example, the work to implement the replacement of the existing 17 year old command and control system has now commenced, and it will take approximately 15 months to complete with go-live planned for the end of February 2012. The Duty Management and Crime and Intelligence systems will be procured during early 2011 with the requests for tenders being issued in December 2010 and January 2011 respectively. Current plans will see the Duty Management System implemented in late 2011 and Crime and Intelligence in 2012, however this is highly dependent upon both the procurement outcomes and the development and of the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) Information Systems Improvement Strategy (ISIS).

Job Evaluation

The Project Board accepted the 'End Stage Report' for Stage 1, the initiation of the project, and has agreed the content and key dates for Stage 2, which is procurement. The project has a dependency on the Force pay, reward and recognition strategy, currently under review by the Chief Officer Group; an agreed strategy has the potential to add precision to project procurement requirements, particularly in respect of pay and grading.

An early draft of the procurement requirements has been produced and will be developed further. Subsequently there will be a number of formal quality reviews until there is confidence that Force requirements have been accurately captured.

Project communications include a monthly update to staff, documents including Project Board minutes added to the JE Intranet site, a job evaluation forum for Police Authority staff in December, and written reports on progress to key stakeholders. Mike Lannin and Pauline Rodea, two experienced police staff supervisors, have been appointed to the JE Project Board, and Chief Superintendent Steve Swani continues as Project Executive, having been appointed Devon BCU Commander. The JE team remains unchanged.

Flooding

I visited Cornwall on the day of the floods, and I saw at first hand the impact the flooding had on villages and towns. People who live and work in those communities are very close-knit; the damage caused was highly distressing.

But as I talked to people, it was extremely obvious that the local police teams responded to the emergency with extreme professionalism. Our officers brought to the incident a deep knowledge of the local communities, a real engagement with people, and a determination to make things better. And they did this in partnership with officers and staff from other agencies like the local authority, demonstrating that the links and collaborative work that goes on every day truly works. It was a real team effort – operational officers received fantastic support from officers and staff in the control rooms, the call handlers, the Airwave Tactics Advisors, and others, all helping to provide a first class emergency response.

The same day the Prime Minister and the HRH The Duke of Cornwall visited the area, and I was very proud of the manner in which we and all our partner agencies responded to this incident.

South West Region Public Order Exercise

The South West Region Public Order team, comprising officers from Devon and Cornwall, Wiltshire, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Avon and Somerset Police, staged two public order/public safety exercises on 17th-18th November 2010 at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. Resources were drawn equitably from across the region, with Devon & Cornwall sending 55 officers. Exercise one consisted of a Defence League protest and counter-protest. Exercise two focussed on an environmental protest that had a mix of peaceful, direct action and violent protest.

The purpose of these exercises is to test the region's public order interoperability, and its progress in developing a public order doctrine in line with HMIC's report 'Adapting to Protest'

Interoperability was shown to have continued to improve, with common standards, terminology, training and equipment being evidenced consistently through both exercises. The policing style utilised was one of engaging with groups and individuals whenever possible and there was a particular focus on overarching human rights issues in conjunction with the ability effectively to respond to criminality.

Bryan Preston from the Authority attended this event and watched the exercise taking place.

Operation Valley

Operation Valley was the police investigation into the double murder of an elderly couple in their own home in Torquay which occurred in January this year. It was a 'Category A' investigation in that there were no known suspects at the outset of the enquiry.

Owing to highly professional police work by officers and staff from the BCU and crime department, a suspect was identified within four days and arrested. Although he refused to co-operate, he was subsequently charged with both murders and a painstaking investigation, involving the examination of thousands of hours of CCTV evidence, continued. After a four week trial Odai Salah was convicted by a unanimous jury and sentenced to serve a minimum of 30 years imprisonment.

This case was profiled in the national publication *Police Review* as a Special Feature.

Operation Stage

This operation was mounted across the force area on Wednesday 24th November to police the demonstrations organised by students in protest at the Government's plans to raise tuition fees. We anticipate additional protests in the future and so we have developed relationships with the organisers to facilitate peaceful protest and at the same time keep people safe.

Marches and demonstrations took place force-wide in places like Teignbridge, Falmouth, South Hams, East Devon and Plymouth. In Exeter, approximately 700 students left the campus and arrived in the city centre for static protests but instead chose to march through the centre, closing roads for about 15 minutes. Despite minor disruption to bus companies, the march passed without any incident.

This event was co-ordinated as a force-wide operation with 46 officers deployed in addition to the support from neighbourhood policing teams. The force has received positive comments from protest organisers in relation to our approach, sensitivity and professionalism.

These protests were part of national coordinated action by students, and we received a request from Avon and Somerset Police for mutual aid as a result of some difficulties they were experiencing in Bristol. Accordingly, we sent a contingent of nearly thirty officers to assist, again demonstrating effective interoperability.

The Special Constabulary: Recruitment

Devon and Cornwall Police has a proud history of volunteer police officers, people who are prepared to work alongside regular police officers to help keep their communities safe. Although we have had to suspend the recruitment of regular officers in order to help us meet the reduced budget we will be given, the recruitment of special constables continues. We have sought to include people who were intending to join as regular officers but whose appointments have been delayed owing to the budget reduction. There is no shortage of applicants: a recruitment 'window' in June resulted in 360 applications, with only the force website used for advertisement. We held an assessment centre for 94 candidates in November to help populate two intakes of 70 officers and then we will still have 125 candidates in a pool. We will hold another assessment centre for 96 candidates in late February and will be aiming to open for recruitment in March for assessment centres in June and October, again for 96 candidates.